



CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF
REALTORS® INC.

Statement on

**H.B. 6464: AAC COORDINATED PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT
... OPPOSE**

**S.B. 371: AAC INTERMUNICIPAL COOPERATION... SUPPORT IN PART, OPPOSE
IN PART**

Submitted to Planning and Development Committee

March 2, 2009

By

Dan Keune
Ellington

Good day, my name is Dan Keune. I'm speaking on behalf of the Connecticut Association of REALTORS®, and it's 18,000 members.

First, we commend Representative Sharkey and the Smart Growth Working Group for their comprehensive analysis on the interplay of economic and tax policies in Connecticut and the extent to which they are – or should -- be integrated with land use policies. The interaction of these forces profoundly impact what every citizen is vitally concerned with -- our quality of life and the high cost of government.

On your agenda today, there are six bills that Realtors support, not just because they advance responsible growth, but because they have the potential to save taxpayers money. By encouraging more inter-town cooperation in the delivery of essential services, homeowners should not only see local property tax relief, but ideally less demands on their pocketbooks from taxes at the *State* level as well.

In the remainder of my three minutes, I want to draw your attention to two bills with severe deficiencies.

HB 6464 has an appealing title. Responsible growth by its nature concerns "coordinated preservation and development." However, the bill vests far too much power in a little known group called the "Face of Connecticut Steering Committee." We oppose it because it gives the group veto power over grant decisions made by

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The Voice for Real Estate™ in Connecticut

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DEP, Department of Agriculture, the Commission on Culture-Tourism-Historic Preservation, and the Department of Economic Development. This Face of CT group should not be the central clearinghouse and voice of authority for determining which applications are "consistent with the principles of smart growth." Surely there are already mechanisms in place to vet these applications without introducing another layer of bureaucratic review—if not the State Bonding Commission then the Legislature's Appropriations Committee and the Governor's Office of Policy and Management. Also, the Face Steering Committee is made up mostly of preservationists and no one from the home building or real estate associations, raising concerns about balance.

SB 371 aims to increase regional cooperation by giving more powers to regional planning organizations and specifically to Regional Councils of Governments (COG's). The Connecticut Association of Realtors supports most of the bill, but we oppose that part giving these bodies the power to tax sales, hotel occupancies, and other local services and possessions. We feel that there is much that the State can do by taking EXISTING revenue and reallocating it on an incentive basis to reward thoughtful, cooperative arrangements by the towns without opening the door to another layer of taxation.

Regarding **HB 6388**, our Association generally favors relief for the towns from unfunded State mandates. However, we need a little more time to view the details of this 52-age bill.

Thank you. Are there any questions?



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